



HANDHELDS NEWS

SONY ERICSSON LAUNCHES WALKMAN PHONE

Sony Ericsson's W800i, launched on 12th August, is the first mobile to bear the Walkman logo. The company is so keen to stress the importance of the new handset to music lovers that inexplicably hatted street-brawler Jay Kay of Jamiroquai will be at a branch of Carphone Warehouse to sell the first few phones.

The W800i has a 2-megapixel camera and built-in MP3 player, and can support up to 1GB of memory with its Memory Stick Duo slot.

PALMONE OFF



Palm OS handset maker palmOne has changed its name to Palm. Palm, inventor of the Palm Pilot, was acquired by electronics company US Robotics in 1995. US Robotics was bought by 3Com in 1997, which spun Palm off as an independent company in 2000. In 2003, Palm moved away from the Palm OS development part of the business as palmOne. Earlier, in 1998, the founders of Palm had left 3Com and founded Handspring, which made handsets based on the Palm OS.

Palm then bought Handspring in 2003, bringing several of its original board members back. In May 2005, palmOne acquired all rights to the Palm brand name from PalmSource and became, once again, Palm. 3Com has since spun off US Robotics as an independent company, so all US Robotics needs to do is buy Palm again, and the circle will be complete.

REVIEW GPS KIT

MIO 269

RATING ★★

PRICE £370 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.globalpositioningsystems.co.uk

DETAILS www.mio-tech.be

Although hikers can buy simple satellite navigation devices that provide bearing, latitude and longitude information, most GPS systems with built-in maps are designed to be used when driving. Mio's 269 differs by having different navigation modes for travelling by car, by bike or on foot, as well as having an internal hard disk and MP3 player.

The 269 is a compact device and, at 240g, is light enough to carry around. Its black and silver finish looks smart, although the wobbly short cut buttons detract from the feeling of quality. Like the Navman iCN 510 reviewed in *What's New*, August 2005, the 269 uses the Windows CE operating system and has a 3½", 320x240 pixel screen. The display is fairly bright but can be difficult to read in bright sunlight, especially when wearing sunglasses.

The navigation software takes around 30 seconds to load, but eventually you are presented with a screen with options to input a new destination or choose from the most recent places you have visited. There is also a Home button, which takes you immediately to a specified address.

Entering addresses can be frustrating. It is not possible to input the name of a road and choose the correct one from a list; the unit won't let you proceed until you enter the name of a town, or in the case of London the first four characters of the postcode. Once you have managed to enter an address the 269 calculates the route quickly, but the unit was unable to plot a route to a test destination from central London, saying the road was in an "untrafficable area".



The 3D view updates smoothly when driving but the display is very busy and has several different icons scattered around the main map area, which makes it hard to take in information at a glance. Scrolling around the top-down map also takes time, as the unit redraws the screen slowly each time. The pedestrian mode is a useful addition as it stops the unit routing around one-way systems.

The 269 has a 2.5GB hard disk and built-in support for playing MP3s. There is only 500MB of storage left after the map software is installed, but this is still enough for around eight albums at reasonable quality. Playback is clear through the supplied headphones, if lacking in bass. You can also back up your Outlook contacts on the unit.

At £370, the Mio 269 is the cheapest GPS system that includes maps of all of Western Europe. Unfortunately, it really doesn't measure up to the competition. Planning a route is slow and difficult, the map display is messy and the mapping software runs slowly. The pedestrian mode is useful, but as a navigation tool the Navman iCN 510 is far superior.

Chris Finnamore

✓ Cheap for a Europe-wide GPS system

✗ Slow; poor interface

SPECIFICATIONS GPS navigation, 3½" 320x240 LCD, USB interface, remote control, SD card slot, 2.5GB hard disk, Western Europe maps.
Part code 269

HOTLIST PDA

PALM LifeDrive

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £294 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk

DETAILS www.palm.com

Palm's LifeDrive is a Palm OS-based PDA with an integrated 4GB hard disk. It has all the usual Palm organiser functions, but can also be used as an audio and video player, or simply for storage.

The PDA doesn't come with headphones, but audio playback is impressive. The LifeDrive is good value for a combined PDA and audio player.



SPECIFICATIONS Multimedia PDA, Palm OS 5.4, 416MHz Intel XScale processor, 4GB disk space, Bluetooth, 802.11b wireless networking, SD card slot

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE

ORANGE SPV C500

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE From free to £50 inc VAT

depending on contract

SUPPLIER Orange 0500 802080

DETAILS www.orange.co.uk

The C500 is the smallest smartphone on the market and has an excellent 2.1" colour screen, Bluetooth, micro SD card slot and 64MB of memory. Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition is a vast improvement over its predecessor. If you want to stay organised on the move, this smartphone is easily the best one for the job.



SPECIFICATIONS Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition, 64MB memory, tri-band phone, colour screen, 640x480 camera.
Part code C500

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE

PALM Treo 650

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £400 SIM-free; £100-£200 w/contract

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com (SIM-free);

www.orange.co.uk (contract)

DETAILS www.palm.com

The Treo 650 replaces Palm's previous smartphone, the Treo 600. It runs the latest version of Palm OS and has a much-improved, higher-resolution screen. The normal Graffiti handwriting recognition system is replaced by a QWERTY keyboard under the screen, which is easy to use. It also works well as a phone despite its chunky size. It's expensive SIM-free, but better value with a mobile phone contract.



SPECIFICATIONS Smartphone, Palm OS 5.4.5, 312MHz Intel PXA270 processor, 23MB RAM, VGA camera, Bluetooth, infrared, GPRS, SD card slot. Part code 1040EU



REVIEW SMARTPHONE

ORANGE
SPV C550

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE From free to £130

depending on contract

SUPPLIER Orange 0500 802080

DETAILS www.orange.co.uk

Orange is due to release its new SPV C600 smartphone in the autumn, but in the meantime it has updated its C500 to take advantage of its music service in the shape of the C550 music smartphone.

The first change that strikes you about the C550 is its altered keypad layout. The C500's rocking navigation button has been replaced by a joystick similar to that on the SPV E200 and E300, although it is less wobbly and more accurate than Orange's previous efforts. The two main soft keys and the Home and Back keys are far smaller than before, and are clustered under the screen to make room for four large music playback controls. The keypad is generally easy to use, but the resized short cut buttons are hard to press. The phone also has a higher-resolution 240x320 screen, which is brighter and clearer than those on previous SPVs, and a megapixel camera, but navigating the operating system is slower than on the C500.

Like its predecessor, the C550 runs Microsoft's Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition. The home screen is uncluttered, with short cuts to common functions such as contacts, messaging and calendar, and the rest of the programs are accessed via the Start menu. As you would expect from a Windows Mobile-based phone, synchronising your contact and calendar information with Outlook is easy using the supplied ActiveSync software and USB cable. Viewing web pages is now easier thanks to the higher-resolution screen, and Internet Explorer



does a good job of resizing and reformatting pages to fit the screen.

The phone is pitched as a music smartphone, and to this end it has a large short cut button that takes you directly to Orange's Music Player service, which has a choice of around 300,000 tracks for download over GPRS. It takes around five minutes to download a normal-length song, and the phone will play the song during the download. There are large skip and play buttons to control playback, but the phone insists on connecting to the Music Player

service whenever these are pressed, so using them to navigate through songs stored on the supplied 128MB memory card is very frustrating.

Aside from the improved screen, the SPV C550 is very similar to the C500. The music player buttons are useful only for navigating the Music Player portal and serve no real purpose elsewhere among the phone's functions, so they seem a waste of space on the keypad. The C500 is slightly smaller, runs faster and has a better keypad layout, so unless you're a heavy user of Orange's music portal it is a superior smartphone.

Chris Fynamore

✓ High-resolution screen; easy Outlook synchronisation

✗ Runs slower than the C500; music buttons have limited uses

SPECIFICATIONS Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition, 64MB memory, 128MB Mini SD card, tri-band phone, colour screen, 1,280x1,024 camera. **Part code** C550

HOTLIST POCKET PC

ACER
n50 Premium

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £240 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com

DETAILS www.acer.co.uk

Acer's n50 won a Best Buy award in our PDA Megatext (Labs, Shopper August 2005) with its powerful performance, stylish looks and low price. It has a brushed metal effect casing and simple, uncluttered design. Applications start up almost instantly. It has good battery life and infrared, Bluetooth and wireless networking built in, as well as a generous 124MB of user-available storage. Excellent value.

SPECIFICATIONS Intel PXA272 520MHz processor, 124.27MB RAM, SD card slot, Windows Mobile 2003 SE, weighs 150g. **Part code** CP.N500H.024



HOTLIST SMARTPHONE GPS KIT

NAVICORE
Personal for
Symbian Series 60

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £199 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.mobilefun.co.uk

DETAILS www.navicoretech.com

Navicore's Personal is a GPS navigation system for the Symbian Series 60 operating system, as used by Nokia and Siemens smartphones. It consists of a Bluetooth GPS receiver and an MMC card containing the map program.

Planning a route is easy thanks to the logical software, and voice prompts are clear and accurate. It's not cheap, but it's the best GPS system for a series 60 phone.

SPECIFICATIONS GPS Navigation for Symbian Series 60 OS, SIRF III Bluetooth GPS receiver, UK maps. **Part code** 133-8432



CHOOSING A...

SMART
PHONE

Four points to remember when buying a smartphone

1 A smartphone's operating system – Palm, Pocket PC or Symbian – dictates its basic features and what third-party software you can install. Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition has the familiar look and feel of Windows, right down to a Start button. Palm devices are preferred by many for their ease of use and the vast number of third-party applications available for them. Symbian is quite common on handset-style smartphones. While Symbian's underlying operating system stays the same, enabling third-party programmers to develop software for the OS, its interface can be fully customised by the phone manufacturer and so it may differ from phone to phone.

2 All smartphones come with a colour screen. A high-colour depth of 65,536 colours is important for viewing photos or video clips.

Typically users navigate and input information into a handset type of smartphone using the keypad and buttons or a jog dial. PDA-style smartphones usually have a touch screen, and both Pocket PC and Palm have handwriting recognition features as well as onscreen keyboards. A few have a built-in QWERTY keyboard.

3 Cameras are common in smartphones. Resolution is limited, with two megapixels and a fixed focus lens being the best you'll get. However, as most images will be viewed only onscreen or sent as a video message, this shouldn't be a problem.

4 Bluetooth makes it easier to link your phone to a PC for synchronisation or wireless web access. For internet access, a GPRS or 3G mobile contract is essential. Sign up for one of these when buying your smartphone and you'll also get a discount.

FILL IN YOUR SPECS HERE
(Recommended minimum in grey)

STYLE: Handset

OS: Pocket PC Smartphone 2002

SCREEN: 176x220; 65,536 colours

INPUT: Keypad

CAMERA: 640x480

BLUETOOTH: Yes

DATA CALLS: GPRS